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SUBJECT: BULGARIA: NSG DRAFT EXCEPTION TEXT FOR INDIA

REF: STATE 085948

Political Officer delivered REFTEL points to MFA Senior Expert in the Directorate of Security Policy, Division of Arms Control and Non-proliferation Elizabeth Konstantinova on August 12, 2008. Ms. Konstantinova will be attending the NSG Plenary in Vienna on August 21-22.

Ms. Konstantinova was aware of the concerns expressed by some NSG members regarding the draft text, but welcomed commitments that India has announced under the U.S.-India Initiative. The best solution, she thought, would be for India to join the NPT. However, Bulgaria was pragmatic in its approach and would prefer to see India within the international non-proliferation regime, rather than isolated and alone.

Ms. Konstantinova asked whether granting India an exception would act as a precedent for other countries. She also asked whether the submission of the "123 Agreement" to Congress in September would depend upon consensus approval at the Extraordinary Plenary in Vienna. She expressed surprise that Pakistan's position had changed and asked whether this had come about as a result of negotiations with the U.S. or as an internal shift in policy.

Ms. Konstantinova expressed some skepticism about whether consensus would be reached at the Plenary meeting on August 21-22, but welcomed the effort. Bulgaria is positively inclined to support the exception text for India, provided India abides by all the commitments it has agreed to on a bilateral basis with the U.S. Though operating within the format of the EU is challenging and though Bulgaria does not see itself as a major player in this debate, she expressed hope that Bulgaria would be able to act as a mediator and be able to help bridge differences.
Karagiannis